



News Release

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Statement on Pausing J & J Vaccine

The Washington State Department of Health will pause the use of the Johnson & Johnson (J & J) vaccine statewide starting immediately, following the [guidance of the FDA/CDC](#). Use of that vaccine will be put on hold until we receive further recommendations from our federal partners about how best to move forward. Safety is the highest priority when it comes to all COVID-19 vaccines.

This action is being taken out of an abundance of caution based on the appearance of a rare but serious side effect including serious brain blood clots ([CVST](#)) combined with low platelet counts in six patients, all women under 50. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will review these cases in the days ahead and will recommend guidance going forward.

About 160,000 doses of J & J vaccine have been administered in Washington so far, out of more than four million doses total. At this time, we are not aware that any of the six patients who experienced these blood clots were Washington residents.

While adverse events such as blood clots are very unfortunate, it is important to remember that out of 6.8 million J & J vaccines administered nationwide, only six people are known to have experienced this side effect. That is a fraction of a percent, which shows us that this side effect, while serious, is extremely rare.

For those who got the vaccine more than a month ago, the risk of this complication is very low at this time. People who have received the J & J vaccine who develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination should contact their health care provider. It also demonstrates how well the robust vaccine safety monitoring systems

work, since this potential safety concern was identified quickly and vaccines were paused to allow for further investigation.

No definitive cause has been identified yet, but the FDA said today that a probable cause is a rare immune response generated by an individual after receiving the vaccine.

DOH will continue to monitor the situation related to J & J vaccine and update on its use as the pause is reviewed and once it is lifted.

A media availability will be held via Zoom today at 10am PST, featuring:

- **Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health**
- **Scott Lindquist, MD, MPH, Acting State Health Officer**
- **Michele Roberts, MPH, MCHES, Assistant Secretary, Prevention and Community Health**

Link to join: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GcPBB_D4RPG268FtbOC0mA

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